WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A digital document containing a digital signature, wherein the document includes a pointer to a piece of software for checking the digital signature.

2.   The digital document of claim 1, wherein the pointer comprises a hyperlink which points to a storage location of the software or contains information about the storage location of the software which is able to be read by another program.

3.   The digital document of claim 1, wherein the digital document has a format for enabling the digital document to be displayed in a web browser.

4.   The digital document of claim 3, wherein the format is at least one of an HTML, XML, and PDF format.

5.   The digital document of claim 1, wherein the software is contained in the digital document.

6.   A method of generating a digital document, the method comprising the steps of:

creating a digital signature for an original document;

generating a digital document from the original document; and

adding to the digital document the digital signature and a pointer to a piece of software for checking the digital signature.

7.   A method for checking a digital document containing a digital signature, wherein the digital document comprises a pointer to a piece of software for checking the digital signature, the method comprising:

loading the software from a storage location indicated by the pointer.

8.   The method of claim 7, further comprising:

executing the loaded software.

9.   The method of claim 6, wherein the original document is selected from the group comprising of digital faxes, letters, agreements, certificates, invoices, orders, order confirmations, and tax assessments.

10.   A computer system comprising a digital document according to any of claims 1 to 5.

11.   A computer system for generating a digital document containing a digital signature, wherein the digital document comprises a pointer to software for checking the digital signature, the computer system comprising:

means for storing data;

means for storing programs;

means for executing programs; and

program code means for performing a method of generating a digital document when executed by the means for executing programs, the method comprising:

creating a digital signature for an original document;

generating a digital document from the original document; and

adding to the digital document the digital signature and a pointer to

software for checking the digital signature.

12.   A computer program stored on a computer readable medium, the

computer program comprising program code means for performing a method of

generating a digital document when executed on a computer, the method comprising:

creating a digital signature for an original document;

generating a digital document from the original document; and

adding to the digital document the digital signature and a pointer to software for

checking the digital signature.

13.   An electrical carrier signal embodying a computer program for performing

the method of generating a digital document of claim 6.

14.   A computer program product comprising program code means which are

stored on a computer-readable medium, the program code means comprising program

instructions for performing the method of generating a digital document of claim 6 when

executed on a computer.